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Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, May 13, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: Ivy Poisoning--How to Prevent It. Information from Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. D. A. Program also includes questions and answers on miscellaneous subjects, and a recipe from the Bureau of Home Economics.

--ooOoo--

"Watch out for poison ivy!"

How many times has a perfectly good picnic been ruined, when little Johnny Junior, standing barefoot in a patch of poison ivy, calls Uncle Henry's attention to a big black spider, crawling over the shiny green leaves of the ivy plant.

"Poison ivy!" warns Uncle Henry. "Get out of there, Johnny, and make it snappy! Don't you know poison ivy when you see it?"

Poison ivy, also called poison oak, is found in almost all sections of the United States. The plant has shiny leaves, consisting of three leaflets, which is a good thing to remember: Shiny leaves, and three leaflets. Late in the summer, the poison ivy plant can be further identified by its white, waxy, berry-like fruit, which looks something like mistletoe berries.

Poison ivy flourishes in the woods and in the open, being especially abundant along fence rows, and at the edges of paths, and roadways. In these surroundings, it is practically impossible to eradicate it completely. However, it's a good idea to destroy small patches in gardens, along back-yard fences, and near frequented paths, where people will come in contact with it.

Some people are much more susceptible than others, to ivy poisoning. Some are afflicted in spite of the greatest precaution, while others appear to be almost immune.

The plants are especially poisonous during the period of thrifty growth, and the probability of being poisoned appears to be greatest in hot weather, when the skin is damp with perspiration. It is also a well known fact that smoke from the burning plants carries the poison, and may cause serious attacks. The poison is an oily substance; the merest trace of it, on the skin, causes severe inflammation. The symptoms of ivy poisoning may appear within a few hours, or they may be delayed for several days. After the first sensation of burning and itching, blisters begin to form, which spread rapidly, and in severe attacks may become ulcerated. They gradually dry up, as the acute stage of the attack passes.

What can we do, to prevent this painful affliction? Numerous remedies have been suggested and recommended, but most of these are only partially effective. A person who has been exposed should thoroughly wash and scrub the exposed parts as soon as possible, with water and soap, preferably laundry soap, which contains an excess of alkali. The washing should be followed by thorough and repeated rinsing. Careless and insufficient washing is worse than useless, because it may serve to spread the poison.

In recent years, some of the salts of iron are reported to have been used with good results as preventives of ivy poisoning. One formula recommended consists of a solution of one part of iron sulfate in five parts of water. If Johnny Junior applies this solution freely, to feet and legs, before he goes picnicking near poison ivy patches, he may be saved a painful attack of poisoning. The iron sulfate solution serves to neutralize the poison. It is also of much value if applied as soon as possible after actual contact with the ivy plant. Iron sulfate may usually be bought in drug stores. One advantage of this formula is its simplicity. It is easily prepared at home. Ask the druggist for three ounces of iron sulfate, and dissolve it in one pint of water. Maybe we'd better write that down -- three ounces of iron sulfate, dissolved in one pint of water.

We'll devote the rest of the time today to questions and answers. The first question is from a man who wants to know how to control dandelions, in lawns.

If proper mowing, watering, and general care of the lawn fail to keep down dandelions, cutting the individual plants, about three inches below the crown, is recommended. Use a weed-cutter, or a kitchen knife, and cut the plants in the spring, before the seed heads form, and again at intervals through the summer. Another effective method is to puncture the crown of each plant, and apply a few drops of crude sulphuric acid. Use a pointed stick for this purpose, and be careful not to spill the acid. Sulphuric acid will eat through clothing, and burn the skin, unless great care is used. If you want to know more about controlling dandelions in lawns, write to the Office of Botany, Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Next question: "Please tell me how to make good coffee, using a coffee percolator."

Answer: The general rule for percolator coffee is to use one tablespoon of ground coffee to each cup of hot water. The length of time to percolate depends on the strength desired and the rapidity with which the percolator "perks."

Next: "I should like to have directions for frying or broiling round steak."

Answer: I am sending you a copy of the leaflet called "Cooking Beef According to the Cut." You will note that frying or broiling round steak is not recommended. Round steak is one of the less tender cuts, and cannot be cooked satisfactorily in that way. I think you'll like the recipe in the leaflet for preparing round steak as Swiss steak.

Next question: "What is the easiest method of cleaning pillows at home?"

Make a cotton bag, larger than the pillow, and transfer the feathers to the cotton bag. Sew together the edges of the openings of both cotton bag and pillow tick, and shake the feathers into the cotton bag. Sew up the opening. Wash in lukewarm water, using a neutral soap. Rinse well. Press as much of the water out as possible. Place the bag of feathers on a cloth, in the sunshine. Turn it often, and beat it, or fluff up the feathers, from time to time. So much for the feathers. Now for the pillow tick. Wash it separately, and starch it on the inside with a stiff starch mixture, so the feathers can't work through. A sponge is a handy thing to apply the starch with. Transfer the feathers, when they're dry.

One more question -- this is from a listener who wants a recipe for cooking liver, and serving it on toast. Ever try Creamed Liver and Ham, on Toast? It's very good. For this dish, you need four ingredients:

1 pound liver	1-1/2 cups cream or rich milk, and
1 pound sliced ham	2 tablespoons chopped parsley.

Four ingredients, for Creamed Liver and Ham, on Toast: (Repeat)

Wipe the liver, and remove the skin. Cook the ham in a covered frying pan until tender, then remove and grind it. In the meantime, cook the liver slowly in the ham drippings until tender. Cut into small pieces, add the ground ham, the chopped parsley and the cream, and stir until well mixed. Serve on crisp thin toast.

Wednesday: "Clothes Make the Child." Program will include menu.

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